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**New warm line helps clinicians tackle patients' substance abuse**  
*NIH and ASAM launch new screening resources*

A free, nationwide service was launched today to help primary care providers seeking to identify and advise substance-abusing patients. The service, Physician Clinical Support System for Primary Care (PCSS-P), offers peer-to-peer mentorship and resources on incorporating screening and follow-up into regular patient care. PCSS-P is a project of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, and the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

NIDA also launched a quick screening tool to help health care providers identify these patients.

The warm line service—"warm" because the response is within 24 hours rather than an immediate response typical of a hotline—is available to physicians and other health care providers at no cost. Providers register with PCSS-P and receive the contact information of a mentor who is a specialist in screening, brief intervention, treatment and referral for patients with substance abuse problems. Mentors can then be contacted, via phone or email, with specific questions about clinical situations involving alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. To take advantage of the service, physicians can call PCSS-P at 877-630-8812, or register online at [www.PCSSmentor.org](http://www.PCSSmentor.org).

The service is an extension of NIDAMED, NIDA's initiative to give health care professionals the tools and resources to screen their adult patients for tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. The initiative stresses the importance of the patient-doctor relationship in identifying unhealthy behaviors before they evolve into life threatening conditions.

NIDA's Quick Screen is an online interactive single-question screen that asks, "In the past year, how many times have you used the following: alcohol (more than 4 or 5 drinks in a day for women or men, respectively); tobacco products; prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons; and illegal drugs?" If a patient indicates past year use of illegal drugs, or prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons, the clinician has the option of conducting NIDA's full screening tool for the specific drugs abused.

"Primary care providers can be the first line of defense against substance abuse and addiction but they need the right tools and resources," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. "Our NIDAMED screening tool is a user-friendly, interactive means to help providers quickly screen their patients for drug abuse. PCSS-P goes a step further, providing peer-to-peer mentorship in the use of these resources."

PCSS-P builds on the success of other warm line models offering peer-to-peer advice on using buprenorphine and methadone to treat opioid dependence. This new warm line is targeted to primary care providers and offers help as providers introduce drug abuse screening into their practices.

NIDAMED resources include a companion quick reference guide and a comprehensive resource guide for clinicians. The NIDAMED resources, including the Quick Screen, can be found at <http://www.nida.nih.gov/nidamed/>

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov). To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's new *DrugPubs* research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or [drugpubs@nida.nih.gov](mailto:drugpubs@nida.nih.gov). Online ordering is available at <http://drugpubs.drugabuse.gov>. NIDA's new media guide can be found at <http://drugabuse.gov/mediaguide/>.

**About the National Institutes of Health (NIH):** NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

The American Society for Addiction Medicine is a professional society representing close to 3,000 physicians dedicated to increasing access and improving quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addictions. For more information about ASAM, visit [www.asam.org](http://www.asam.org).